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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 9978
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 5722
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002316

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [PREF](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: USDP EDELMAN DISCUSSES SECURITY WITH PRIME
MINISTER GILANI

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Under Secretary for Defense Policy Eric Edelman and Ambassador met with Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on June 2. USDP Edelman stressed the U.S.'s long-term commitment to Pakistan and discussed how the U.S. might assist Pakistan in addressing the growing security threat posed by militant extremists. PM Gilani welcomed U.S. security assistance and expressed support for expanded defense cooperation. End Summary.

¶2. (C) PM Gilani began by commenting on the ongoing power struggle between his Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and coalition partner Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and the government's view of President Musharraf. Gilani asserted February's elections had given the PPP a mandate for national leadership and that other political figures "should accept that." Referring to PPP's proposal to curtail some of Musharraf's authority, Gilani asserted that under Pakistan's parliamentary system, and per its Constitution, primary power lay with the National Assembly. Nonetheless, he stressed, a balance of power between Parliament and the Presidency was necessary. Gilani assured USDP Edelman he had no "humiliation agenda" regarding President Musharraf. Gilani noted, however, the government intended to address "things that are hindering Pakistan's progress as a nation" by amending the Constitution. (Note: Gilani was referring to a legislative package proposed by the PPP that would provide for reinstatement of the judiciary and amend the Constitution to limit some Presidential powers.) Despite the political turmoil, Gilani said his two main concerns were the growing economic crisis and deteriorating security situation in the border areas.

¶3. (C) USDP Edelman thanked Gilani for his assessment of the political situation. USDP Edelman said he was visiting Pakistan on behalf of the Secretary of Defense to emphasize the USG's strong commitment to its enduring relationship with Pakistan. USDP Edelman stressed the U.S. was aware of and respected the sacrifices Pakistan forces had made fighting extremists. The U.S., he observed, had learned some hard lessons in counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq and would like to share this knowledge with Pakistan. Referring to Pakistan's recent negotiations with tribal leaders, USDP Edelman said the USG agreed there was no pure military solution to the threat posed by Pakistan's militant groups, but expressed concern that pacification of militants in the short-term could potentially increase the long-term threat.

"Masoods Are Not All Militants"

¶4. (C) Responding to concerns regarding cross-border attacks, Gilani responded that Pakistan would like to see a greater effort on the Afghanistan side. Pakistan, he said, has several hundred border posts compared to about 100 on the Afghan side. He agreed, however, that military force alone could not successfully address the growing militant threat in the border areas. He added that the threat of force should be an implicit element in Pakistan's approach to resolving the problem, but should remain in the background as much as possible.

¶5. (C) Gilani said the Army had pulled back from tactical positions in some tribal areas to re-open roads and allow many of those displaced by fighting to return to their homes. The Prime Minister described this as a goodwill gesture and declared, "Masoods are not all militants - the problem is the war lords." This was not, he continued, "a war of the West; this is our own war for our own interests." It was also critical, Gilani emphasized, for the government to be vocal about the threat of terrorism and to engage public support for counterterrorism efforts.

Gilani: Government Welcomes Expanded Defense Cooperation

¶6. (C) Gilani stated his support for strengthening U.S.-Pakistan cooperation on counterterrorism and said he was focusing his personal attention on such issues as Coalition Support Funds, the proposed use of FMF to upgrade Pakistan's

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F-16s, and enhanced intelligence sharing. Gilani said the government welcomed expanded defense cooperation, including increased U.S. support for the Frontier Corps and assistance in improving Pakistan forces' night capability and aerial mobility.

¶7. (C) Gilani said he wanted to improve relations with Afghanistan and noted that, after being prohibited from traveling outside Pakistan for nine years, his first trip was to meet President Bush and the second was to meet Afghanistan's President Karzai. (Note: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have suffered a serious setback following media reports of inflammatory remarks by Karzai threatening unilateral cross-border action and Afghan officials accusing Pakistan of complicity in an assassination attempt against Karzai.)

¶8. (C) PM Gilani raised the continuing problem of approximately 3 million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan. Gilani noted this was a difficult problem to address as many refugees had lived in Pakistan for years. He expressed concern, however, that refugee camps provided fertile recruiting grounds for extremists. Gilani hoped international donors would provide assistance for the refugees, specifically by creating employment programs in Afghanistan to encourage and facilitate their return.

¶9. (C) Referring to India, Gilani acknowledged the eastern border had been stable of late, but said Pakistan still needed to maintain strong conventional capability and vigilance towards India. On the issue of Kashmir, which President Bush had raised during their meeting in Sharm el Sheikh, Gilani said he was open and "ready to respond to anything" in working with India to resolve the dispute.

¶10. (C) Gilani concluded by saying Pakistan could greatly benefit from increased U.S. assistance and would welcome the "Democracy Dividend" proposed by Senator Biden.

¶11. (U) This cable was cleared by USDP Edelman.

PATTERSON